

Forum

THE PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY AT 50

FOR THE past weeks, the media have been gaga over the 50th anniversary of *Playboy* magazine and the "Playboy philosophy," whose guru, Hugh Hefner, began to mainstream pornography and de-couple sex from a committed marital relationship.

What interested me most about this latest excuse to run pictures of almost naked women on television and of the



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77-year-old Hugh Hefner in his silk pajamas, surrounded by surgically enhanced women young enough to be his great-granddaughters, was the usual media complicity in promoting a one-sided and incomplete picture of the "free love" generation (which, as it turned out, was neither free

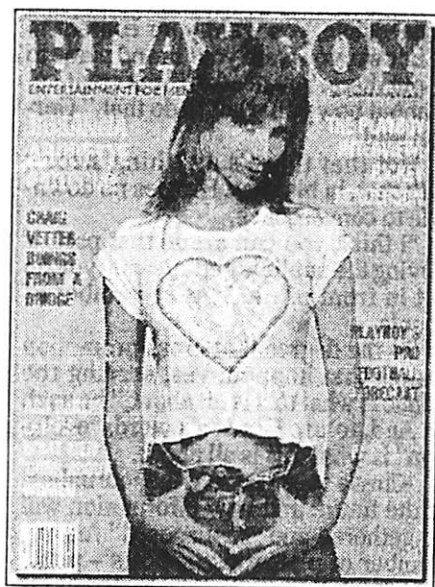
nor love).

Where were the stories on venereal diseases, broken marriages and shattered lives of the women who were "bunnies" and "playmates" in Hefner's fantasy world? One might think that those "hard-hitting" journalists so dedicated to presenting both sides of any story would have interviewed people whose lives have been transformed — not for the better — by the sexual revolution.

Writing on *FreeRepublic.com*, Patrick Fagan says we now live in a "culture of inverted sexuality." This is Hugh Hefner's legacy.

Remember modesty? Gone with the cultural winds. Writing in *The Washington Post* last week, Tina Brown said that Paris Hilton's pornographic antics and fame show we live in an age "beyond embarrassment."

The progeny of the *Playboy* philosophy — which said men did not have to



limit their sex drive to their wives but could plunder whatever woman would allow them — is brokenness, depression, addiction and, in some cases, suicide. What Hefner thought would liberate has, in fact, enslaved. What he promoted as fun turned out to be its opposite for larger numbers of people.

The throwing off of all restraints has produced a culture without rules, without signposts and without meaning. Is Hefner ever asked by the numerous toady interviewers about what responsibility he bears for any of this? Not that I've seen or read. I guess lust means never having to say you're sorry.

Would Hefner acknowledge that AIDS, which is currently devastating Southern Africa with a vengeance worse than Europe's medieval Black Death, is any of his doing? There is a cause-and-effect relationship between promiscuous sex and venereal disease, divorce, 40 million abortions in this country, depression and suicide among teenagers who thought they had a right

to grow up in a two-parent home. The Hefner message to constantly pursue "greener grass" mocks the message I grew up with. Then, if your marital "lawn" turned brown, you fed it nutrients. Now, if it starts to die, you move to a new "yard."

In many ways our politics mirrors the *Playboy* philosophy. Once, a divorced man could not be elected president. Recently, a president had sex with an intern in the Oval Office and millions thought it was a private matter and no one else's business.

Madonna writes children's books and her heir-apparent to the crown of slut queen — Britney Spears — engages her in a lip lock on national television. David Letterman proudly announces the birth of his out-of-wedlock child and the audience erupts in wild applause. Marriage announcement to come, or not. It doesn't matter. Gwyneth Paltrow and her "boyfriend" announce she is pregnant. They got married last week. Maybe they'll get divorced next week or next year. It's all the same to devotees of the *Playboy* philosophy.

Hefner and his philosophy have demeaned women, turning them into the sexual toys the feminist movement decries. Because Hefner is pro-abortion (he would have to be, given the consequences of what he promotes) and because of his financial donations to numerous liberal causes, he gets a free pass from feminists.

Many think Hefner is cool as he hands over his "little black books" to be auctioned and lounges in bed in a *New York Times* picture and article that ignore the cultural havoc he has unleashed on America.

Hefner has said he freed Americans from their uptight attitudes about sex. Given what replaced it, restraint, fidelity, character and chivalry never looked so good.

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